

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INTERVIEWS OF CVT PRESIDENT BY MEMBERS OF CODEL

1. CONGRESSMEN FLYNT, CHAPPEL AND FRASER; CONGRESSWOMAN FENWICK; STEPHEN BRYEN, STAFF ASSISTANT TO SENATOR CASE, AND ROBERT BOETTCHER, STAFF MEMBER OF THE HFAC, SEPARATELY VISITED CVT PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU.

2. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF BRYEN, WHO HAD A MORE EXTENSIVE EXPOSURE TO CVT, THE CODEL RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FROM BUU, EITHER VOLUNTEERED BY HIM OR IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS:

A. BEFORE BUU AND HIS ASSOCIATES LEFT HANOI FOR THE SOUTH IN 1954, HE HAD REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE COMMUNISTS THAT THEY WOULD NOT HARM THE UNION CADRE WHO WISHED TO REMAIN IN THE NORTH. SUBSEQUENTLY HE LEARNED THAT ALL OF THEM WERE JAILED, KILLED OR JUST DISAPPEARED, AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AS HE KNEW IT WAS DESTROYED. THIS, HE CONTENTS, IS A MAJOR REASON WHY THE CVT IS SO STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST.

B. THE COMMUNISTS ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE CAPITALISTS OF SOUTH VIET-NAM OR THE GOVERNMENT OF VIET-NAM; THEIR REAL CONCERN IS ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE CVT WHICH APPEAL TO THE MASSES. TWICE THE COMMUNISTS HAVE CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM AND NO ONE HAS COMPLIED. THE CVT IS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM THAT WAS ABLE TO CALL A SUCCESSFUL STRIKE.

C. BUU WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR AND SEE WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENCY BEFORE HE CAN DETERMINE AN

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ENDORSEMENT. IF IN THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR MONTHS PRESIDENT THIEU

CHANGES HIS POLICY THE WAY BUU THINKS HE SHOULD, THE PEOPLE WILL DEMAND THAT THIEU CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT.

D. BUU REVEALED THAT HE AND A GROUP OF MODERATE NATIONALISTS ARE ENGAGED IN AN EFFORT TO PERSUADE THIEU TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH THE VARIOUS OPPOSITION GROUPS WITH THE HOPE OF CREATING A DETENTE AND THUS UNIFYING THE ANTI-COMMUNIST NATIONALISTS IN THE FACE OF THE COMMUNIST POLITICAL AND MILITARY OFFENSIVE.

E. FATHER THANH AND VU VAN MAU ARE NOT AS STRONG AS THEY TRY TO APPEAR; NEITHER, RESPECTIVELY, REPRESENTS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OR THE BUDDHISTS. BUT, DESPITE THEIR WEAKNESS, THIEU SHOULD INVOLVE THEM IN DECISIONS AND PROGRAMS THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO IMPLEMENT BECAUSE, IF HE CLOSES THE DOOR TO THEM, HE FORCES THEM INTO THE ARMS OF THE COMMUNISTS. THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT DEAL WITH THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION WITH POLICE AND VIOLENCE.

F. TOO MANY PEOPLE CONCENTRATE THEIR ATTENTION ON PRESIDENT THIEU, FORGETTING THAT IT IS THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE WHO WILL HAVE TO REMAIN IF THE COMMUNISTS TAKE OVER. "WE ANTI-COMMUNISTS WILL BE KILLED IN ANOTHER BLOODBATH AT THE HANDS OF THE NEW COMMUNIST MASTERS."

G. GETTING RID OF THIEU IS NOT THE ANSWER. "WHEN WE WERE RID OF DIEM WE HAD CRISIS AFTER CRISIS. WHAT WE NEED IS CONTINUITY BUT WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN POLICY AND IN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THIEU SHOULD INVOLVE OPPOSITION GROUPS SUCH AS THE CVT TO CARRY OUT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS. THE CVT HAS EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL PROGRAMS BUT THE GOVERNMENT IGNORES US. DR. DAN (DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR LAND RECLAMATION AND HAMLET ESTABLISHMENT) COULD GET MUCH MORE DONE IF HE WOULD INVOLVE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT WORK. DR. DAN HAS THE SECOND LARGEST BUDGET IN THE GVN AND CANNOT, BY HIMSELF, DO ALL THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE."

H. "WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT; I DO IT OFTEN." BUU GAVE THE CODEL MEMBERS COPIES OF HIS STRONG SPEECH TO THE OCTOBER 1974 CONVENTION OF THE CVT WHEREIN HE CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT CORRUPTION AND FAILURE TO DO ALL THAT MIGHT BE UNCLASSIFIED

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DONE TO IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT. HE ALSO DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF THE CVT MONTHLY MAGAZINE "CONG NHAN" AND THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE " CVT NEWS."

I. BUU OPINED ABOUT THREE OR FOUR OF THE ARRESTED JOURNALISTS ARE COMMUNISTS. HE KNOWS THAT TE LIEN IS A COMMUNIST. HE DOES NOT HAVE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT THE ARRESTED JORNALISTS WERE BEING BEATEN; HOWEVER, POLICY ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE "HARD PEOPLE".

J. HE HAS KNOWN MADAME NGO BA THANH A LONG TIME; IN FACT, HE SUPPORTED HER FATHER FOR MINISTER OF LABOR IN 1954. "SHE IS LIKE MANY WOMEN--SHE GOES FROM ONE EXTREME TO ANOTHER."

K. THE PROSPECTS FOR BUU'S FARMER WORKER PARTY ARE GOOD IF THERE IS AN HONEST ELECTION. THE COMMUNISTS ARE HATED AND THE GVN HAS NOT IDENTIFIED WITH THE MASSES, ONLY THE FARMER WORKER PARTY HAS MASS APPEAL.

L. THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE CORRUPTION IN VIET-NAM BUT THE WAR HAD BROUGHT ON MORE THAN NORMAL. THE COMMUNISTS BENEFIT FROM IT AND HELP TO CREATE SOME OF IT. CONTROLLING CORRUPTION IS NOT EASY BUT IT IS RELLY A MATTER OF PUTTING GOOD PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF POWER. EVERYBODY, INCLUDING THE AMERICANS, KNOW WHO THE GOOD PEOPLE ARE.

M. BUU WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT BECAUSE, "WE VIETNAMESE STRIKE OUT A GOAL EARLY IN LIFE AND USUALLY STICK TO IT. MINE WAS LABOR, NOT POLITICS."

N. BUU DID NOT OBJECT TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT BEING SO INVOLVED IN SOUTH VIET-NAM BECAUSE "WE BOTH HAVE A MUTUAL INTEREST IN ANTI-COMMUNISM AND THE LOVE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM." IT WAS NATURAL FOR THE U.S. TO ATTEMPT TO HELP IN SUCH A MASSIVE WAY.

O. BUU ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR THE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET, AND WAS CONFIDENT SOUTH VIET-NAM COULD REACH SELF SUFFICIENCY IN THREE YEARS.

3. STAFF ASSISTANT BRYEN VISITED THE CVT SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER IN THE SAIGON WATERFRONT AREA OF KHANH HOI. HE LEARNED THAT,, IN ADDITION TO THE ONE HE VISITED, THERE ARE 21 OTHERS THROUGH SOUTH UNCLASSIFIED

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VIETNAM, ALL OPERATED BY THE CVT. HE LEARNED THAT THE UN FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION HAD A PROJECT WITH CVT TO EXPAND ITS FAMILY PLANNING COMPONENT OF THE WELFARE CENTERS. (CODEL MEMBERS WHO COULD NOT VISIT THE CENTER RECEIVED A TRANSLATION OF A LOCAL LANGUAGE MAGAZINE STORY ABOUT THE OUTPATIENT CLINIC, PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES, AND TYPING AND HOME ECONOMIC CLASSES OPERATED BY THE CENTER.)

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AT LEAST SOME MEMBERS OF THE CODEL WERE EXPOSED TO A USEFUL, THOUGH NEW (FOR THEM), DIMENSION OF THE TOTAL SCENE THAT IS SOUTH VIETNAM.
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